

long ago that the chairman and I and the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, joined together to continue this effort to make microenterprise a central element of our foreign assistance. I want to say that the chairman has done an outstanding job in continuing that effort.

I yield to the gentleman from New York for any comments he might make.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and I thank the gentleman from Connecticut who has been a cosponsor of this measure for being so supportive of this measure.

I am pleased today to ask our colleagues to support H.R. 1143, the Microenterprise for Self-Reliance and International Anti-Corruption Act of 2000.

Mr. Speaker, the House passed H.R. 1143, the Microenterprise of Self-Reliance Act, in 1999 to increase support for the very important work of microenterprise institutions the world over who produce tangible results and change the lives of thousands of poor people in developing societies.

This landmark bill not only honors the fine organizations and leaders who promote private enterprise and development efforts throughout the world in furtherance of our country's objective of helping those who help themselves, but also serves to place a higher priority on microenterprise programs as an essential component of our development assistance.

This bill is designed to provide a framework for the delivery of seed capital to poor entrepreneurs who are the backbone of the informal economies in developing countries. By strengthening micro enterprises, more income is generated and jobs are created at the grassroots level. Hence, poor economies grow and the need for foreign development assistance declines.

In Africa, more than 80 percent of employment is generated in the informal sector by the self-employed poor. However, many poor entrepreneurs are trapped in poverty because they cannot obtain credit at reasonable rates to build their asset base or expand their otherwise viable self-employment activities.

The microenterprise community has clearly demonstrated that the poor are capable of expanding their incomes and their businesses dramatically when they can access microloans at reasonable rates. H.R. 1143, authorizes programs that can reach these poor people who want to help themselves and thereby help to build their societies.

To date, many fine organizations such as the Foundation for International Community Assistance, Action International, and Opportunities International have built fine records that illustrate that lending directly to the poor is a good investment and that poor people can do repay their loans and build successful businesses.

Mr. Speaker, Microenterprise institutions not only reduce poverty, but they also reduce dependency and enhance self-worth. These are ultimately the objectives that we all wish to achieve in the developing world.

I am pleased to highlight that microenterprise institutions are very successful in raising

private funds in conjunction with those provided by our government. These efforts are commendable and should be replicated in other foreign assistance programs as well. It is precisely this approach of having the private and public sectors working together that will yield the results and genuine development that we all seek for the less fortunate of the globe.

By providing access to micro credit to the world's poor, our country stimulates the entrepreneurial spirit and helps to develop and stimulate the informal economies of some of the world's poorest countries. This investment, rather than a hand out, makes good sense and makes a true difference in the lives of the less fortunate.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the microenterprise community, especially the Microenterprise Coalition, including FINCA, Action International, and Results for their constructive suggestions and assistance. I am also grateful for the assistance provided by the Administration and the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Reclaiming my time under my reservation, if I could just add, also, I would like to thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE), the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the chairman, as well, for their work on the anti-corruption portions of this conference report. This is an important piece of legislation. America has lost as much as \$26 billion to foreign bribes. We have now got our G-8 partners joining with us to fight corruption and bribery. This legislation will help build strong democracies globally.

Over the past five years, U.S. firms overseas lost nearly \$26 billion in business opportunities to foreign competitors offering bribes.

Unethical business practices continue to jeopardize our ability to compete effectively in the international market.

Bribery and other forms of corruption impede governments in their efforts to deliver basic services to their citizens; they undermine the confidence of people in democracy; and they are all too often linked with trans-border criminal activity, including drug-trafficking, organized crime, and money laundering.

In 1999, the Vice President convened a Global Conference on Fighting Corruption where he declared corruption to be a direct threat to the rule of law and a matter of profound political and social consequence for our efforts to strengthen democratic governments.

It is inarguably in the U.S. national interest to fight corruption and promote transparency and good governance.

My bill will make anti-corruption measures a key principle of our foreign aid program.

By helping these countries root out corruption, bribery and unethical business practices, we can also help create a level playing field for U.S. companies doing business abroad.

When Congress passed the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in 1977, the United States became the first industrialized country to criminalize corruption. It took us nearly two decades to get all the other industrialized nations to do the same. But American leadership and perseverance succeeded in getting countries which once offered tax write-offs for bribes to pass laws that criminalized bribery.

This bill extends our leadership in fighting corruption to the developing countries.

The International Anti-Corruption and Good Governance Act of 2000 requires that foreign assistance be used to fight corruption at all levels of government and in the private sector in countries that have persistent problems with corruption, particularly where the United States has a significant economic interest.

The bill would also require an annual report on U.S. efforts in fighting corruption in those countries which have the most persistent problems. My intent in requiring this report is to get from the Administration a comprehensive look at all U.S. efforts—diplomatic as well as through our foreign aid program—in those 15–20 countries where we have a significant economic interest or a substantial foreign aid program and where there is a persistent problem with corruption.

This bill makes an important contribution to pro-actively preventing crises that would result from stifled economic growth, lack of foreign investment, and erosion of the public's trust in government.

Among other things, the act establishes anti-corruption and good governance programs as priorities within our foreign assistance programs. The act underscores the importance of our efforts to combat corruption and promote good governance overseas.

It will also allow administrations some flexibility in those relatively rare circumstances where developments on the ground, such as a coup or an economic crisis, would otherwise restrict it from acting through nongovernmental organizations.

Thus, provisions of law that would otherwise restrict assistance to foreign countries are made inapplicable, with certain exceptions, to assistance provided in furtherance of this act. Assistance that would have been prohibited except for this authority cannot be provided directly to the government of such a country, but can be provided to the government through grants and contracts with nongovernmental organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. QUINN). Without prejudice to the possible resumption of legislative business and under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### FEDERAL RESERVE NOTES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.